Discourses

MADDEN

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/discourseonpries0000revw

DISCOURSES

ON

PRIESTHOOD

WITH PANEGYRIC OF ST. PATRICK

BY

REV. W. J. MADDEN

EDITED

WITH ADDITIONS BY

REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C. SS. R.

ST. LOUIS, MO., 1903
PUBLISHED BY B. HERDER
17 SOUTH BROADWAY

16234

NIHIL OBSTAT

St. Louis, Dec. 12, 1902
F. G. HOLWECK
Censor Theologicus

IMPRIMATUR

† JOHN J. KAIN
Abp. of St. Louis

Dec. 13, 1902

Copyright 1903
by
JOSEPH GUMMERSBACH.

Becktold
Printing and Book Mfg. Co.,
St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

PREFACE

The first four discourses on "Priesthood" and the beautiful Panegyric of Ireland's great Apostle were delivered by Rev. W. J. Madden.

The discourse on Vocation to the Priesthood and Thoughts on the Celibacy of the Clergy have been added by the editor as being appropriate to the subject, as well as to enlarge the work and increase its usefulness.

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	3
First Discourse, Priesthood	5
Second Discourse, Priesthood	17
Third Discourse, Priesthood	33
Fourth Discourse, The Priest in Our Time	51
Vocation to the Priesthood	75
Thoughts on the Celibacy of the Clergy	91
Panegyric of Ireland's Apostle	97

PRIESTHOOD.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

"For he was a priest of the Most High God."

—*Genesis xiv. 18.*

One of the most impressive ceremonies of the Catholic Church is the ordination of a priest. The priesthood is of divine origin and dates from the beginning of the world. It must arrest the attention of any thoughtful mind that in every nation and among every race, all over this round earth, no matter how they may differ in language, in caste, in color, there is found, and always has been found, a body of men set apart to fill the functions of some kind of priesthood. Their office is to act as intermediaries between their fellow-men and the invisible but evidently active power that moves behind the visible creation.

In the centre of Europe—which represents to us the foremost and most civilized part of the world—there is a venerable man to whom is accorded the

title of Sovereign Pontiff. In its native language *Pontiff* means a bridge-builder, and by a figure of speech the word describes his office of bridging for men the chasm between the visible and invisible worlds. He has been there a great while, though in 256 different personalities. He has borne the same title and filled the same office for eighteen centuries and a half. He is the head of a numerous priesthood. For more than a thousand years that head and that priesthood were one for all Europe; and in numbers they reckoned over 100,000 throughout the various nations. When in the gliding centuries some nations broke away from that unity, they by no means dispensed with a priesthood. They set up one of their own, as if in the nature of things a nation would be incomplete without one. I know that some of the separated countries, like England, reject this word, and I have read some scornfully angry words about it even from the prelates of her National Church. This is because it represents to them the doctrine of Sacrifice, which they repudiate. But though up to the time of their separation priesthood always did include sacrifice among its functions, and in our view does still, yet it is not its sole function, and in its broad sense truly designates

any body of men engaged for their fellow-men in sacred things. Priest-*presbyter*—as a mere word, means, as most people know, an old man, but old only in the scriptural sense that grey hairs are the wisdom of a man, and as a common noun means a grave instructed person engaged in certain solemn duties. So that in this sense, England, severed from Christendom in her creed and rites, can yet be truly said to have a priesthood. At the present moment it is said to number 17,000 in the State-established church. But that is not all. There are 12,000 more who serve those who in their turn broke away from the separated English Church and refused to "conform" for a hundred different reasons, which supply the basis of the hundred different and independent varieties of Christianity to be witnessed in Great Britain to-day. Germany, too, which separated a little earlier in the same sixteenth century than England, has also retained a numerous priesthood, and with the same disintegrating results. This German Lutheran priesthood is said to number about 30,000. Russia, which cast its religious lot with the Greek Church when it was finally severed from Rome soon after the Council of Florence in the fifteenth century, has a

priesthood, too, of its own, said to number 100,000. What is said of Europe applies with equal truth to all its offshoots of colonization under newer skies. Besides the Sublime Porte on the Bosphorus stands the chief Mollah or Caliph, the head of a well-nigh countless army of Imaums who do priestly office for the wide-spread Moslem world.

As we travel eastward from Europe to those vast and ancient lands, until so recently wrapped in mystery for the Westerns, this fact of priesthood assumes even larger proportions. There are three countries there—Siam, Burmah, and Thibet—where the whole male population must pass through the ranks of priesthood at some time of their lives, and most of them remain priests. In Benares, the sacred city by the Ganges, alone there are 1,450 Hindu shrines, with thousands of priests in attendance. In China, with its myriad fantastic creeds and practices, a million priests are scarce enough to keep its temples; while in Japan every traveller tells us the population is almost ever in motion on pilgrimages to countless shrines and monasteries served by Buddhist and Shintoo priests. As we descend in the scale of nations, there is scarcely a wild tribe in savage lands that has not some one acting the

priest for them, be he medicine-man, or witch, or charm-doctor. It is a need to them to have someone to represent them with the invisible world.

And what is a fact at the present moment in the world has been so at all times. The Greeks and the Romans were the most advanced—not to use the too variable and relative word civilized—of the old peoples. From the fragments of the literature of both which have come into our hands, it is manifest that they had an elaborate priesthood whose religious functions were deemed indispensable to the public life of the people. At the zenith of Roman greatness the most enlightened of their Emperors, Augustus, thought his imperial power incomplete until he had himself solemnly proclaimed the chief priest of the nation. Of the still older, and, in a way greater people, the Egyptians and Phenicians, the same has been shown by the recently discovered ruins of their ancient cities and temples.

If, then, there is one thing clearer than another, it is that this institution of priesthood is bound up with the life of the human race. And it is a fact of proportion so enormous looming up through all history as it is patent in the world around us yet, that we wonder how the impatient spirits, who ever

now and again cry out against the incubus of priesthood, the superstition of priestcraft, and the unbearable burden of being priest-ridden, are going to get rid of it. They cannot do it; their task is too gigantic. It stares them in the face at this very remote moment of history still in all its vast universality. Where is the combination that can dislodge it? Morally speaking it is not to be done. And why? The student of even elementary philosophy (which is nothing but the science of accounting for things), will tell you that when a fact of that kind is found to prevail at all times and in widely separated regions among mankind, it is something that is a part of the nature of men. This is another way of saying that it is imposed on them by a power higher than themselves. In a word, it is of Divine intention in the constitution of the human condition.

Men may grow restless under such an institution and rebel. They may knock off chips of it here and there, and now and again, but the structure they cannot destroy. It is "a tabernacle not made by human hands." This is why men in the mass will have a priesthood. It is rooted in the divine origin of

things. Such is the mere philosophy of the question.

But this statement, it may be said, is open to some damaging, if not fatal objections.

How attribute to God such a mass of contradictory priesthoods as we see existing around us? They not only differ widely one from another, but they are mutually antagonistic. Many of them are engaged in open polytheism, and many founded on false and absurd pretentions.

Certainly no one careful of logic or common sense could think of attributing all the priesthoods as they now exist to divine institution. From the source of truth contradictory things cannot proceed. But it is a clear and convincing answer to that objection to show that the original idea of priesthood—its fundamental reason—was good and right in itself, and that the distorted and corrupted use of it is due to the self-induced ignorance, the wayward fancies and perverse play of free will, on the part of various branches of the human family. If I, as a skilled architect, erect a stately and well-proportioned building, and others come and patch and botch and disfigure it with unsightly additions, surely the disfigurements are not to be attributed to

me. In the same way the disfigurements of priesthood are not to be attributed to its original designer in the first plan of things. And here we find it to have been a right and seemly thing in itself. It is founded on the relations between a created being and its Creator—on the imperative duty of that created being to acknowledge his dependence on the Creator and pay Him homage and fealty, especially when that Creator deigned to share with him the magnificent gift of intelligence and reasoning power. "To His own likeness did He make him." Were each one his own Creator, there would be no need of worship and no room or reason for priesthood. But we know too well that this is not so. We had no hand or act in our own origin. We depend from a greater and a higher power. We are therefore placed in the necessity—strictly logical necessity—of acknowledging our dependence in humble and reverent submission, for we are as things owned by the superior power, whether we will or not. To break loose and rebel and deny, is to greatly dare and be rash, and to court a certain and a deadly peril.

It is in the daily practice of the lives of men to acknowledge superiority, to pay tribute to it, and

yield it unstinted admiration and praise. It was always so in the case of great rulers of nations and benefactors of the human race. There are living men to whom the present generation owe a great deal for the vastly improved conveniences of life—men of surpassing genius, who but rarely appear in the passing centuries. Who has aught but praise for them and admiration? Who grudges them the wealth that flows to them, or refuses to pay the royalty on their marvellous and most useful inventions? And if men thus act spontaneously towards a Stevenson, a Kelvin, and an Edison—creatures like themselves—how much more obsequiously should they bear themselves, if they are reasonable and reasoning, to the great Creator, and, therefore, the Master and Owner of all the wonderful things, living and inanimate, within our view?

The necessity, then, the created being is in, by the very nature of things, of acknowledging the superiority of his Creator, and yielding homage and submission, is the fundamental idea on which priesthood rests.

Furthermore, this duty being incumbent upon all, and due from every created rational being, it is at once apparent how wise it was, and seemly and

right to them that it should be well organized and ordered for them, that they should have leaders and instructors and guides in this indispensable duty. And the appointment of these is nothing but the appointment of a priesthood.

Duties that are universal, if left to the individual, are, as is well known, but poorly performed, and, as often as not, entirely omitted. To pay taxes to support the State is the duty of every citizen. Is that left to every individual to pay when and as he likes? You know very well it is not. There is no department of the State so thoroughly and so strictly organized. There is a great army of tax-gatherers and clerks; there are numberless offices whence instructions issue and to which returns are made, and at the head of all is the most trusted and able man of the State, of the country,—the guardian of the public purse. Can we not then ask with unanswerable reason what there can be objectionable, or superstitious, or degrading, and the rest of it, in the existence of the officers and guardians of God's tribute of dependence from His creatures, His own property, and just in the way in which it pleases Him to exact or receive it? No, given the universal duty of Divine homage, a duly

appointed priesthood is not only a reasonable, right, and a fitting thing, but it becomes a necessity by the very nature of the case.

He permits us to seem as false prophets before our fellow-men. We denounce certain conduct; we publish prohibitions. Many, even of our own, set it all at naught, do what they please in direct and defiant opposition. Nothing happens and there we are left, impotent to make them feel their wrong. They smile scornfully or indulgently at us—we are to them false and powerless prophets! Worse than that He permits: If His priests persist and "annoy" the wrong-doers, we get punished and imprisoned and sometimes killed. From St. John Baptist, who got his head in his hand for rebuking Herod on account of his lust, down to our own days of the free-mason Governments of France and Italy, this has been so. How hard to bear! All this shows to demonstration the necessity and existence of a future state of vindication, retribution and award. But we can show little or no effect of power in this present world. Before the waywardness of men God's agents occupy a place of humiliation and danger in this life. Yet in face of this gloomy, uninviting fact, vocations fail not, crowds still seek the perilous

office. This as actual fact is worth investigating. Why do they seek it so eagerly and in such numbers. Priests were never more numerous. "Seminaries" abound and are filled. Oh, various are the motives, etc., etc., as is easy to analyze, taking human nature and conditions of toilsome life into account. Half of the candidates never realize to the full extent what they are facing.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

"God hath looked down on the children of men to see if there are any understanding of Him or seeking Him out."—*Psalm* lii., 3.

An instituted priesthood can not be the result of chance or accident. Things that happen thus are never of long duration. Like a fashion they pass quickly out of use; they are soon forgotten, and men change them for something more interesting and novel; while there is, and has been, nothing so persistent among men as priesthood. Much less could it have been the result of a cunning plot, or self-interested design, or sinister conspiracy among a class or caste of men to exploit an obvious individual duty, or play upon the credulity of their fellows. Why, a fraud of that gigantic proportion and lasting so long would be the greatest moral miracle of history. The thing is absurd and impossible, and a libel on human intelligence. Besides, are there not severe laws in all countries against public deceit and false pretences? And we have

yet to hear of priesthoods being arraigned under this clause of criminal codes. Oh, no, you may rest assured that when an institution of that kind has ever attended the human family like a shadow, and cannot be shaken off or got rid of, though periodic and spasmodic efforts have been made to do so, it has been included originally in the Divine plan of things. And we have seen that it was rightly and fittingly so included, that it is a most reasonable thing, and given the universal duty of homage from the creature, a thing to be expected from the wisdom of the Creator.

Now, if you wish to investigate how it came to be distorted into such varieties, and how its sacred offices ran into such contradictions, you have to follow the fortunes of the scattered human race, and mark its wanderings further and further from the first revealed light of the one true God, dimmed at first by every wayward human fancy, and then well-nigh extinguished in the tumult and corruption of human passions unrestrained. There you shall find evidence more than enough to account for the widely-divergent uses to which priesthoods are and have been employed. At the same time, it must be noted that the same fundamental and befitting ideal un-

derlies and informs them all, thereby showing that in their origin at least there is everything that commends itself to human reason.

However, it is one thing to show on philosophic grounds that priesthood must have been in the original Divine plan of things, and quite another to prove that God did, at a given time, interpose, and directly by His Divine authority give shape and rule and form to direct its offices and functions. The two, however, are intimately and usefully connected, for having established the first, according to natural reason, the mind is prepared to hear without surprise that there is historic evidence of His having done so, and the statement comes to us furnished with the strongest probability even without further scrutiny.

The record of this statement we have in the oldest book in the world—a Book most venerated by the foremost races of men. For them it bears on the face of it much more than human wisdom, and much that man could never know of himself, and taken all in all the best that has ever been given him. I am quite aware that in our time the undisciplined spirits who seek to shake off every trammel to human thought, have been at great pains to find some

book older than the Bible, on the chance of being able to distract men's attention from its spell, and present them with a wisdom more attractive than may be found in its hallowed pages. They have made distant journeys, spent large sums of money, and roughed it in exposure and discomfort in semi-civilized lands for this curious purpose. They have delved among the ruined cities of Mesopotamia and by the torrid banks of the Nile. They have found, it is true, very ancient documents—not books, but things engraved on stones and bricks and tablets. Then a work of even greater labor confronted them—deciphering the meaning of these dead and long-buried tongues. This, with an industry worthy of a better result, they have succeeded, or rather assert they have succeeded in doing. And what has been this great treasure-trove? Alas! untrammelled human thought ofttimes leads poor men many a silly dance. This unriddled ancient wisdom was revealed in lengthy lists of barbarous and blood-spilling despots who reigned long ago—lists of their wars and victories—lists of the things buried with them—glimpses of religions stained by foolish idolatry and obscene rites—accounts of their household expenses, and even so valuable an acquisition

to our knowledge as the total of the royal washing bill. Men want something more elevating than that; of this they know, alas! enough and too much already.

It was thought at another time that the great classics of Greek and Roman literature would supplant the venerated Bible. But on analysis all men with the truer and higher sense of things have found the subject matter of these old classics *on the whole* gross and debasing, filled with vile romances of imaginary deities, who would not have been tolerated among decent men and women. Oh, no. The Bible still holds the field, and shall hold it as long as men are left who crave for a fatherhood in God, and rightly believe that, through this sacred volume His chiefest revelation of Himself to them has been made.

I remember reading from one of those clever writers, who, though accomplished, seemed beating about in the fog that human reason often raises for itself in its unaided groping to account for all things, a sentence that sounded to me like the cry of a baffled soul. "I would rather believe that there were no God than to believe in a God who, having made His rational creatures, forthwith

ceased to hold any intercourse, have any further dealings with them, or left them no message from Himself. The first would be absurd, but the second would be still more so." He was right. And that is why there are hundreds of millions still who regard the Bible as the Divine message.

And there, in that part of it called the Book of Leviticus, and in the 8th chapter of that Book, will be found the record of God's own direct orders concerning the priesthood. He there commands that a certain class of men be set apart for that service and that alone. He defines their duties, how and what and for what purpose they were to sacrifice and to minister; that they were to be held sacred by the people as vested in His Divine authority, and even what garments they were to wear, so as to be distinguished from and ranked higher than the rest. When we analyze this statement, and find it all tending to a good and excellent purpose, namely, the keeping the people in mind of God and dependent relations to Him, and above all of holding them in fear of crime and sin against His law, we must bow before its wisdom and admit it as entirely worthy of inspiration. Not that before this time other men were not called and did not act as priests, such

as Abel and Noah (who got the tradition from prediluvian times), and Abraham and Melchisedech. But here God is said to have given detailed instructions about them for the first time.

Now, even at this early stage of the institution, a strange thing happened to which we are not entirely strangers in our own days. Just as we sometimes hear the restless spirits of our times cry out against any and all priesthood, and view with impatient eyes the members of that sacred calling, and vent their favorite sneers about shams and humbugs raising themselves with vain pretence above the people, whom they affect greatly to pity, so in those very first days there were found men to say like things, though not quite so bitterly as our moderns. But God answered them very quickly, it is recorded, and in a way so terrible as to make the very boldest pause. In the 16th chapter of Numbers the story is told, and for the benefit of our freethinkers it is worth repeating. When the great Leader of the Israelites heard the tribe of Levi murmur against the newly-established priesthood of Aaron and his family, his heart was troubled, and going within the tabernacle, "where the glory of God dwelt visibly," he fell prostrate before the Lord

and besought Him to vindicate him in what he had done by His command. Then, rising up, he went and stood before that tabernacle, facing the murmuring malcontents in all the strength and majesty of the Divine authority. Have any of you ever seen the great statue of Moses by Michael Angelo, the one he struck with his chisel on the knee and said, "Speak"? It is one of the noblest of sculptured figures, scarcely surpassed even by the skill of a Phidias or Myron when Greek Art was greatest. Well, it must have been this scene that was in Angelo's mind while executing this splendid work. Core, Dathan, and Abiron stood forth as leaders on the other side, and sullenly declared that they would never abide by the appointment of Aaron and his family, and accused Moses of imposing on the people for self-interested motives. Then, in the hearing of all the people, Moses spoke a solemn and an awful challenge. "On the morrow," he said (I quote only in substance), "let these men and their followers appear with fire in their censers to offer before the Lord, and Aaron and his sons will also appear with their censers. Then the Lord will show whether what I have done be of my own motion and unworthily to our advantage, as you allege, or

solely in obedience to His commands. If the former, these men shall go unhurt, and die the death that is the common lot of men. If the latter, the earth shall open beneath their feet, and living they shall go down into hell." The challenge, terrifying though it was, was accepted. These men did not believe in it; indeed, we can fancy the skeptic's sneer, to which we are not unaccustomed, on their lips as they retire, and their words to the people not to let themselves be imposed upon by the pretences, if not the tricks, of this old man. On the morrow the multitude assembled in a wide circle round about. Core, Dathan, and Abiron, with their followers of the Levi tribe to the number of 250 men, drew up before their tents, bearing the censers with the sacred fire, and Moses, with Aaron and his sons, stood over against the tabernacle. Each side were confident in their own way. The Levites wore the jaunty air of confidence so characteristic of unbelief, sure that to-day they should expose imposture, free the people from its thraldom, and break for ever the power of Moses. The great leader, on his side, showed no weakening of his dread purpose and no faltering in his awful challenge. As the first wreaths of the blue incense began to rise in the

morning air, Moses raised his hands on high and called on God to vindicate His priesthood. Then the muffled thunder of an earthquake was heard, the earth rose and rolled in great waves, the multitude with cries of terror dispersed on all sides, while the ground beneath the feet of the Levite leaders gaped apart, and they and their followers, with their wives and children and tents, were suddenly engulfed, and, as Moses had said, "living they went down into hell." But the dreadful tragedy was not over yet. The multitude having recovered somewhat from their terror, returned the next morning seeking Core, Dathan, and Abiron and their dependents. No trace of them or their encampment was to be found. Not having waited to see the end, they did not know exactly what had happened, so, emboldened by the tranquil appearance of everything around them, they began to utter violent reproaches against Moses, and even accused him of having secretly made away with the Levites. "It is not enough," they said, "that you brought us forth from the milk-flowing land of Egypt to hunger in the wilderness, but you must now turn to murdering the people of the Lord." And surging up around his tents, they made as if they would kill him. Then

Moses withdrew into the sanctuary of the tabernacle, and falling down he besought the Lord once more to vindicate him before this wayward people. And lo! as he prayed the heavens opened, and through the clouds lambent tongues of fire darted and struck and withered to cinders row after row of that serried mass. Moses, now shaken to his soul with sorrow for so terrible a visitation, said to Aaron, "Take quickly the censer from the holy place and the sacred fire from the altar, and going, stand between the living and the dead, that the Lord may stay His anger." And no sooner had the High Priest entered among the people and raised on high the holy fire than the plague ceased, but 14,700 of the unbelieving and the stiff-necked people had perished. Dreadful story! Let him scoff at it who chooses, but first let him measure well how rashly daring he may be who pits himself against the will and the power of the Most High.

It would be well also for those who seek to slight the ordinances of God, and much more still for those who are bold to tamper with or try to destroy them, to remember that the same God is still there—the same yesterday, to-day and forever. It is true He has not often repeated that first awful miracle of

His visiting justice in exactly the same way, yet no less visibly does He from time to time extend the strong and sure arm of His chastisement over those who strike at His priesthood. Take a few instances from our own century, and the few closing years of the last.

What became of the men who drenched the soil of France with sacerdotal blood about a hundred years ago? Those leaders of the French Revolution carried all before them for a time—they gained all their ends. The monarchy and the throne went down before them. All the rich lands of that fairest of countries they confiscated, and all its wealth they appropriated. They desecrated and secularized the churches, they plundered the church property, and scattered and murdered the priests. Yet after a little while, in a strange unaccountable way, those very men were seen to turn on each other with fiendish hate, and one by one on the same scaffold that they reddened with a torrent of innocent blood, they met their own ignominious end.

What became of that man of colossal mind whose meteor-greatness flashed across the world in the opening years of last century? In furtherance of his manifold and wide-reaching policy, he dragged

a feeble and venerable Pope across the snowy Alps and interned him in France. There, for five years he held him prisoner, imperiously dictating to him, even bullying and insulting him and warning him that he and his clergy were to be the submissive tools of his power and nothing else. At that time this Emperor of yesterday almost held the world in his hand. Europe shook beneath the tramp of his victorious hosts. He played with the crowns and thrones as so many toys. Yet a few years go by, and the day comes when he is marched a prisoner himself between an armed guard into the very chamber where he held the Pope in captivity. And there, with hand trembling in impotent rage, he was forced to sign farewell—"a long farewell to all his greatness." Thence he was relegated to a lonely island in a tropical ocean, where for nearly six years —the same time he kept the Pope a prisoner—he was left to eat his heart out in the bitterness of hopeless solitude and baffled ambition.

What has become of the man who since 1870 is thought by some to have surpassed even a Napoleon's greatness? In the hour of his greatest triumph, enjoying the unquestioned adulation of an admiring world, the great Iron Chancellor of Ger-

many turned to persecute the Catholic priesthood of the nation. He cut off their revenues, he imprisoned or exiled fourteen archbishops and bishops, and twelve hundred of the priests. He flung contemptuous defiance at the Pope when he intervened, and heard him not.

For years the Catholics of Germany—and there are about 13,000,000 of them—were in great part deprived of the ministration and the consolations of their holy religion. The storm blew over, but the day of Bismarck's punishment surely came. By the hands of a youthful ruler he was rudely thrust from office, stripped of all his power, and sent to the obscurity of private life. Those who treat of the high affairs of State tell us that the passion for influence and power is the strongest emotion known to men, and that there is nothing that statesmen covet and cling to so fondly and forcibly as that. What, then, must this master of all living statesmen have felt, left in the seclusion of Friederichsruhe with no more voice in affairs than the village schoolboy? Even the dignity of fallen greatness left him, for he then began to show himself to the world in the petty, pitiful role of a spiteful and innocuous grumbler.

Let me here for a moment draw your attention to the nice balance of Divine justice as shown in certain mitigations that accompanied these two latter cases of punishment—for though the worldly skeptic will not call them so, but deem them mere turns in the wheel of fortune, the man of faith sees in them the guiding hand of an over-ruling Providence. Though Napoleon's fate in St. Helena was dreadful and melancholy beyond most things in history, yet he was spared from the still greater one of the unprovided death. In his last hours he was surrounded with the consoling ministrations of his religion, of which with a re-awakened faith and true repentance he is said to have availed himself. In looking back through his eventful career, you will find it to his credit that he alone with a ready and strong hand rescued religion in France from the chaos and the ruin of the Revolution. He restored much of the church property, re-established the hierarchy, and re-founded all the Christian schools. Though his subsequent crimes undoubtedly brought down judgment upon him, yet for the good he had done mitigation was accorded.

In the same way the German Chancellor, after five years of fierce injustice, at length relented, re-

pealed in part his persecuting laws, made overtures of peace to the Pope in the face of the world, and restored to their spiritual charge both bishops and priests. Hence men of faith are not surprised at the favorable turn things took for the aged statesman within his last days. The sympathetic visits of his Emperor, their public reconciliation, the great number of congratulatory telegrams and the deputations and addresses of which he was so often the recipient, what were they all but mitigations for the good he had mingled with the evil he had done? Above all the affairs of men, God's is the only arm that "reaches from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things" according to His over-ruling Will.

THIRD DISCOURSE.

"Every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. . . . And let no man take this honor for himself but he that is called of God as Aaron was."—*Hebrews v. 1-4.*

When we call to mind what is set forth so clearly in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers, how God Himself directly established a priesthood, made minutest regulations about its functions, and then with a tremendous and terrifying sanction safeguarded its sacredness and exclusiveness; and when we further add to that the testimony of the inspired Apostle just cited, it must seem to the religious mind that there is nothing so saddening and so perplexing, in looking round the world in which we are, as to find such a variety of priesthoods—that is, priesthoods taken in the broad sense of bodies of men set apart to act "for men in the things that appertain to God." Mere variety would not of itself be inconceivable, but variety that is essentially different and mutually contradictory is not only incon-

ceivable, but deplorable and alarming in a matter to which God Himself attaches so profound an importance.

To take only that part of the world best known to us, the English-speaking countries, which include, as you know, our colossal Republic as well as Great Britain and all her great Colonies in both hemispheres. If you enter any of the great cities that are there everywhere to be found, you cannot fail to notice the great number of church buildings occupying their fairest sites. Their spires and towers rise conspicuously, and their fine architectural proportions are truly monumental adornments of their streets. And you naturally say to yourself, verily here is a people who fear and serve God, who are generous and even lavish with their money in expressing what they feel; and if the words of the Psalmist occur to you about God "looking down upon the children of men to see if any are trying to understand Him and seeking Him out," you think He would surely find them here. Yet when you come to examine about those churches in detail you discover, and shall no doubt be pained at the discovery, that not any half-dozen of them, nay, in most places scarcely any two of them, represent

the same phase of religious thought or teaching —that their multiplicity only stands as a sad, sad witness of a Babel confusion and conflict among men as to the right way of serving and honoring God! You will find that the congregation in one church will have nothing to do religiously with the congregation in the next; the ministers that serve them have been trained in different and opposing schools, or not trained at all; in one the flock is told that one set of practices and one code of belief are necessary to be followers of Christ and to be saved, while in the same street or around the corner, another flock is told that those practices are a mistake, and the doctrines need to be very much modified to meet what they deem necessary for salvation, and so on, and so on, as is well known, through the whole lengthened and distressful catalogue.

Some thirty years ago when Japan woke up from the long oriental sleep of the Asiatic nations, and determined to range itself on the side of Western civilization, a commission of the most intelligent men of the country was appointed to investigate and report on the institutions of Europe. Their attention was to be given first and especially to Eng-

land, as the nation they most admired and deemed the greatest—for its long and successful tenure of India must have deeply impressed the oriental mind. They were to report on four things there —its parliamentary system, the judiciary, the military and naval organizations, and religion. It is said they came and examined everything carefully as instructed, and they duly reported that the parliamentary system was admirable—so favorable was their report on this that it has since been adopted for Japan—the judiciary was beyond reproach, and, what is rarer, beyond corruption, the military and naval organizations were perfect—perfect, alas! in the science of human slaughter; but they could not recommend its religion, they could scarcely find out what it was, since in London alone they discovered about a hundred different versions of it!

In the capital of very pagan China there have been erected since the Treaty of '59—a treaty written with a bayonet's point—five or six different Christian churches, the outcome of the impatient zeal of many good and simple souls for the conversion of the poor heathen Chinee. Only one district in the city was assigned for the erection of those churches, so that they are very near one another, almost in

the same street, I believe. It is told that two educated Chinese were walking in this street when one remarked to the other "that it was unwise of these foreign barbarians to build so many small temples; would not a single large one have been much better?" "Oh, my friend," said the other, "I see you are not well informed; these foreigners are not in agreement about their religion, and if they were all put into one temple they would surely fight." "Then," said the first, "what a lot of simpletons they must take us for, when they come to convert us to a religion they cannot understand themselves!" How sad is all this. Oh! the pity of it, and pity 'tis, 'tis all true. If, my brethren, the Savior pronounced a woe on that man that scandalized, put a stumbling block in the way of one little child's soul, what woe has He reserved for the men, whoever they may be, that have caused a scandal like that in Christianity to block the way of millions of souls?

This comes mainly from opening the door to individual choice in the sacred ministry and severing it from one supreme and certain authority. Once open wide that door to this liberty of setting up priesthoods, according to the fancy of individuals here and there, and this great calling, which has

some potent and mysterious attraction for so many, is sure to run into wild and fantastic innovations. Has it not ended in our own days in the surprising development of the lassie-street-preacher, and in the broader farce of the Rev. Matilda Jones of Chicago? Oh, if ever there was a case of others rushing rashly in where angels fear to tread, this is one. To stand in God's place before men—to teach and to guide souls through life's shoals and quicksands in His holy name and by His Divine authority, has often appeared to many men trained and sanctioned for the position, a calling so sacred and sublime that they faltered by the way and were tempted to fly from its burden from a feeling of utter unworthiness. And gracious God! has it come in our day to be the plaything of every ignorant and presumptuous man and woman whom fancy prompts? Was it, then, in vain that the great apostle of the Gentiles, having first defined the solemn and sacred functions of priesthood, uttered the impressive warning, "let no man take this honor for himself, but only he who is called of God as Aaron was." Nay, he says further on, that "even Christ himself did not glorify himself by this honor," but He who said—"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten

Thee," and the Spirit said—"Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech."

Where, then, shall we seek for signs of this Divine vocation? In this call the voice of God is no longer audibly heard as Aaron heard it, and Samuel and Saul of Tarsus. Is there still on earth a constituted authority in charge of this thing so sacred and so jealously cared for by God in the past—an authority from which this call can still emanate with the same weight as from the very voice of God Himself? To know this we have but one source to appeal to, and fortunate for us that source is unquestioned because it is Divine. Let us see what Christ said and did about this vital matter, and then if we find that what He said and did is still said and done on earth in His name and by His authority, we shall be pretty near the track of where to find the true and authorized priesthood. Priesthood by Divine ordinance filled so large a part in the Old Dispensation that when He, who was "the Word made flesh" came to dwell among the Jewish people, we naturally expect that He did not overlook this ordinance in changing from the old to the new. Nor are we disappointed. St. Luke in the 6th chapter of his Gospel relates that when our Lord came to

appoint His new priesthood, or rather to impart His own priesthood to His followers, He deemed it so important a work that He spent the whole previous night in prayer alone upon a mountain. Then on the morrow He called all His disciples together and selected twelve from among the number and gave them the name of apostles. And it was to them only, later on, He gave the commission to go and teach all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It was with them He promised to be all days, even to the consummation of the world. It was to their teaching alone that He attached salvation, and to the rejection of it, condemnation. They only were with Him when He gathered up all the sacrifices of the Law and merged them, like the types and shadows they were, into the substance of one real and clean sacrifice, foretold in prophecy to be henceforth offered up from the rising to the setting of the sun. And at the supper table on the night before He suffered, He ordained them the priests of that sacrifice of His flesh and blood under the appearances of bread and of wine, when He said to them, "do this" —this stupendous thing of calling His whole being, His flesh and blood, manhood and Godhead to-

gether, under a few elements of nature—a miracle or series of miracles that the great creating hand alone could effect in a way utterly beyond our comprehension—"do this," even this, He said to them, "in remembrance of Me."

And He did yet another wonderful thing for them. It was in that mysterious and entirely unwonted life He lived in His glorified and real body after rising from the dead, when He used to appear suddenly among them, even passing through the solid panels of a door, more subtle than a shadow or a ray of light, thereby giving them a glimpse of the mystery of His eucharistic real presence; it was on one of these occasions that, standing over them, He breathed upon them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost—whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained." With the very prerogative of God he endowed them in full discretionary and judicial authority.

He also gave them a chief in a very pathetic and impressive scene. A little before He went away in the glory of His Ascension, He one day, in the presence of the other ten, turned abruptly to Peter, and said, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" And,

with humility avoiding the comparison, Peter answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." And He said, "Feed My lambs." A little while and He again asked exactly the same thing, Peter making the same response. Then a third time He repeats the question, and Peter, wondering and troubled, replied, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, and Thou knowest that I love Thee." Then Christ said, "Feed My sheep." John 21 ch. Which scene has always meant for the best interpreters that Peter was not only to be the chief pastor of all the faithful, but to be the chief teacher and authoritative guide to His priests. It was thus, dear brethren, that Christ our Lord made His priests.

Now before making the historical application of this, I would have you remark that He distinctly includes the sacrificial function in that priesthood. It was to be expected, for it was so throughout the whole of the Old Dispensation, and did He not say that He came not to abolish the law or abate it by one jot or tittle, but only to fulfil it and perfect it? This He could only do as far as the sacrifices went by summing them all up in His own one great sacrifice on Calvary, and the foretold clean oblation of it which He taught His Apostles to perform. I

know that one of the stock objections of our modern critics of everything in the heaven above as well as on the earth below to the Bible is on this very question of sacrifices. It is, they say, derogatory to the mighty Creator to suppose that He could have ordered poor dumb animals to be slaughtered in His honor; besides, it is very cruel to the animals. Now, to any man who calmly reasons and reflects on things, there is a great amount of insolence on the part of the dependent creature laying down lines of conduct for his Creator—God. In fact, the only logical ground left for these critics of Divine things is to step upon the supreme platform and to prove that they are all little gods themselves, absolute and independent. But until they become so, which will never be, and as long as they remain only created and dependent and limitedly understanding beings, which will be always, they are out of court in questioning the things that appertain to God. It is none of their business what God chooses to do or to order with the things that He has made, and sheer insolence to seek to be His counsellor. Besides, their declaiming cannot alter or arrest the *fact* of things as they exist and are ordained by Him. They speak as if they were gods. That is about the plain trans-

lation of their attitude. Now God has placed, as is evident from experience, the whole animal as well as the vegetable creation at man's disposal to use and live upon them. And what more natural thing for man, knowing that they have been thus given to him by Him who made them, than to turn to Him as a kind of grace before eating, and in recognition of the Sovereign giver, offer in His sight the first part of what he is about to use. This is the idea and foundation of sacrifice, and, as man is constituted, nothing is more natural to him. He *must* express in outward action his feelings of acknowledgment and obligation and reverence and admiration. You doubtless have often come across a man who is remarked for being very attentive and obsequious to another, and when asked why, he says: "Oh, I owe so much to that man; in fact everything I have—home, position, my whole living;"—and so he goes on sending his friend little presents, though he knows he does not want them, and never omits an occasion to show him attentions and how faithfully he remembers his favors. And all applaud him for this and respect him, and his friend naturally looks for it, though it adds nothing to his prosperity; and if the other cooled off and ceased to bestow a thought on him, he would just as right-

fully feel hurt about it, and the neighbors would cry shame on him as being a worthless and ungrateful fellow. Now in a larger and higher sense who will not say it ought to be the same between the creature and his Creator. Most certainly it ought, and, for the credit of our race, it most often is.

With regard to the fastidiousness of those who object to the killing of animals for sacrifice, it is easy to show how they mistake sentiment for logic. Many of those dainty persons no doubt sit down every day to a joint of meat and enjoy it. Let us trace the history of that joint. It takes us in the early morning to the suburbs of the town, where each day huge droves of meek and patient cattle are standing waiting, and the bigger the town the larger grow the droves, in some cases reaching up to the hundreds of thousands. What are they waiting for? Why, the knives of the slaughterers, who go to their bloody work without a qualm. They kill them all, skin them, cut them up, and distribute them over the city, where they reappear in the cooked joints so enjoyed by the fastidious objector to animal sacrifice. Yet rivers of animal blood must daily flow that human appetites may be sated, and no one says it nay. On the contrary, almost a panic

would follow the announcement that not a pound of meat was to be had in the market on any one day. Yet because long ago one animal was taken apart and slain before the Lord as an expression of gratitude and acknowledgement for the meat He gave for the use of all, hands go up in horror, horror illogical and hypocritical. The truth is, God sets no value on animal life; He gave it mainly for man's food, and man, when reasonable, accepts that fact, in the consequences of which he has no responsibility. At all events, in the New Law our Lord has taken away from sacrifice this outward form which gives to some such unnecessary offence, and His sacrificial priesthood have to do but with the clean oblation, and the most real of all, under the inviting guise of daily bread.

Finally, in determining where now is done what Christ did in making His priests, I have no desire to tread the delicate ground of judging others, nor have I a word or thought of censure for those who in all good faith think they are right, or believe they are doing good—let them see to it themselves. Furthermore, I do not even wish to be looked on as in the suspected position, like Cicero, of pleading for my own house. I merely appeal in this matter to

the honest testimony of history and experience. And it must be said that if any of you were to witness the ordination ceremony of a Catholic priest, you would have had little difficulty in recognizing the repetition in this far-off corner of the world, and at this late date in the twentieth century, of what Christ Himself had done in appointing His priests. And what happened there happens on similar occasions wherever the Catholic Church in union with Rome is to be found throughout the world.

There was the Divine call duly weighed and attested—not left to the individual choice or fancy of the candidate. That was long since taken out of his hands and subjected to the careful supervision of those having authority and spiritual experience to decide on its genuineness. And the final acceptance rests with whom? Not with the priests who train and teach the young Levite, not even with the Bishop of the place, but with the Pope, the successor of the Apostles, for it is from him the Bishop holds his special faculties, delivered to him in writing at his nomination and carefully kept by him in his archives. And when we look for the Pope's commission we trace that back through 256 predecessors to Peter, and from Peter to the very hand

of Christ Himself. And He, acting through all these human agencies endowed with His authority, delivers thus His call to the priesthood to this very hour.

And the Bishop thus authorized proceeds to do what Christ did. He commissions the ordained to go and teach and baptize. He then blesses and consecrates his hands, giving them power to bless. He then delivers to him the cup with the wine and the bread and imparts the power to offer sacrifice; he invites them to his side by the altar, the new supper-table, and word by word together they repeat the miracle-working words, "This is My body," and "this is My blood," just as Christ told the Apostles to do in remembrance of Him. After that the Bishop, by the Pope's commission, breathes upon him and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Then he is a priest. This is seen at every ordination; the same has been witnessed at the ordination of the two hundred thousand Catholic priests that are now in the world, when they were called to the final sacred order. This is Christ's true priesthood surely, and none other.

I said in opening that there were many cities in the world where regrettable confusion of contradictory priesthoods may be found, but it is not so everywhere. You will see in the great cities of continental Europe many churches also, some of them living witnesses from the far past of the vanished centuries—in Italy, France, Spain, Southern Germany, the great Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poland, Belgium, and part of Switzerland, but in them you will find no divided voice of priesthood; you will hear no contradictory doctrines; you will hear the same faith, so identical that a child from our school would know it; you will see the same altar, the same rites in the same old Latin tongue, the same vestments, the same devotional practices, with every face turned to Rome, and every hand consecrated by Peter's mandate through Leo. Would that it were thus in all Christendom! It is for this that all righteous men are beginning to crave. A longing for religious union is in the air. We read in the Gospel for this Easter-day that some eager souls went out from Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane to visit the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid. They found it empty, and a voice addressed them, "You come here seeking Jesus of Nazareth;

He is risen, He is not here." At this same Eastertime there are crowds of earnest souls who have gone out to certain churches on the same errand—oh! would that an angel voice would say to them too to-day, "You come here seeking Jesus of Nazareth; He is not here. Long ago your forefathers have put Him out of this. Behold where they used to lay Him; His altar used to be here, but altar and tabernacle and sacrament they have taken away. No, He is not here. If you would find Him, you must go where Peter is and the brethren of his priesthood; with them and them alone has He promised to abide until the end of ages—as on Peter, and on Peter only, He has built His indefectible Church, against which the powers of hell shall never prevail."

THE PRIEST IN OUR TIME.

FOURTH DISCOURSE.

"Let this chalice pass from Me."—*Mat.* xxvi, 39.

It is told that a Judge of England's High Court, much given to controversy, and as St. Beuve, I think, expressed it of somebody else—*tourmenté par des choses divines* (tormented by divine things),—was induced by a friend to call on Cardinal Newman with a view to a discussion of some of his difficulties. The introduction over, the Judge abruptly addressed the cardinal: "You are a priest, and therefore assume to represent God—to be, in fact, His agent with your fellow-men. Now will you show me how you have any more intimate personal dealing with God, or any more personal knowledge of Him, or any more personal commission from Him, than anyone else?" Then a very unexpected thing happened. This venerable man who was once the

pride of Protestant Oxford and was now a Prince of the Catholic Church, stood up with a pained expression and walked silently out of the room! There are, perhaps, many who feel as disappointed at his not waiting to answer, as at Pilate's not waiting for our Lord's answer to his famous question, "What is Truth?" The interview was not renewed and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen never got his answer. Yet when we look at hard facts all about us in the world there is much that is painful to us priests, and we discover that the question of Sir James, albeit somewhat rude, is not his alone, but that of vast numbers besides. Believing ourselves endowed with vast powers, yet to be utterly disregarded by a majority of our fellow-men is not a pleasant thing. It gives a feeling of loneliness. It humiliates us and makes us ashamed. Take the facts of this interior California town in which I live. There are here over 2,000 non-Catholics, as against a bare hundred of nominal and practical Catholics. How isolated a priest must feel in such a place may be imagined, and to think that this great majority coldly disbelieve in his powers makes it hard to resist a feeling of shame. Some few on personal acquaintance are friendly in their external

relations, but the greater number pass me by in utter indifference. As for the surrounding rural population, were I to walk through their cattle, their empty gaze would scarce be less intelligent or interested. This is hard to bear from adult people, but the children—how infinitely sad. There are about 600 attending public school, and they are as far from the priest as the Antarctic pole. They pass him with the stare they would bestow on some curious animal, and not seldom over little countenances that ought to be angelic, passes the dark shadow of satanic malice. Heartrending! I am now setting down mere facts, and, bare and unexaggerated, these are facts. It is not to be supposed that nothing was ever attempted to alter the ugly features of such facts. Nearly everything short of endangering the public peace has been tried, but they remain such as described, and the little wooden Church seating 120 is too large for those who come to listen! It may be said that it is morbid and not fair to confine the view to so narrow a limit. Well, let us go farther afield. I am not all forgetful or inexperienced about the conditions in larger areas. In this State of California where, in round numbers, the non-Catholics are one million and a

quarter, as against less than half a million Catholics, you may be sure that a similar state of things prevails in most places within its borders. Why, it is only recent history that a movement, whose only and truest parallel is that of the Boxer in China, was on foot among the people of this free State, to drive out Catholics by a process of boycott, disemployment and slow starvation. When the gentle Boxers of China used, for a precisely similar end, more rough-and-ready means against "the missionaries," who were trying to convert the Chinese to the religion that the A. P. A.'s profess at home, there was a cry for blood and vengeance—and it was answered. But in anyone similarly protesting against their own scarce less savage methods in pursuing California Catholics—it was "flat blasphemy."

Let our view be wider still. In all the United States the non-Catholics are sixty-six millions as against nine or ten millions of Catholics, nominal and practical. This fact alone, which nobody can question, contains in the large all the ugly features indicated in the small place. It exhibits heresy and unbelief rampant in this great country.

The priest is here a very insignificant figure in-

deed, except he has to be recognized or used as a political factor—even then reluctantly, and as a make-weight on the tail of a party.

If we cross the seas and note the signs in older lands the situation is hardly more encouraging. In the early part of the year 1901, the Pope himself described it. Speaking at a Consistory in April of that year he said: "Venerable Brethren, accustomed as we are to address you on trying as well as happy events, we do not wish to conceal from you the special causes of anxiety which disturb us at this moment. The great trouble that afflicts us is to see that the trials and sorrows that Catholics have to face, far from diminishing, become more serious day by day, and spread from one quarter of Europe to another like a real contagion. A great number of men, separated from each other by long distances, but united by a common purpose, are making open war upon religion and despising, with as much ingratitude as pride, the blessings which Jesus Christ brought to the human race. The object and intention of the campaign undertaken against the Religious Orders (of priests) in a neighboring country is to destroy them gradually. Neither common law nor equity nor striking proofs of good

works has succeeded in averting this catastrophe. It is sought to prevent the young from receiving further education at the hands of those who have already educated so many eminent men. While the widest liberty is allowed to other people to live as they please, it is refused to those who choose to live in perfect innocence under a rule in accordance with Divine counsels and tradition." Such is the witness Pope Leo bears to the character of our times. Men of the teaching class in France, the country to which the Pope alludes, have for thirty years made open war upon the priests. At the town of Cahors in 1894, a certain Senator Macé, founder of the "Teachers' League," declared in a public speech that "no day ought to pass without bearing away some remnant of the rubbish of dead beliefs." He affiliated this league to the Grand Orient of France, the center of French Freemasonry, saying that "here the daughter was in her mother's home." The organ of the League, "Le Bulletin," raved against the priests. "Ignorance and Superstition, symbolized by a mitred priest, should appear strangled by a cord bearing the inscription, 'Teachers' League,'" it said, describing some projected statue to the Republic. "Poor priests!" it

wrote again, "in vain you thunder against our league and against Freemasonry, they will survive you; but what difference do the last groans of these dying beasts make to us!" Thus through every note of this raucous chime have the changes been rung and clanged and banged in every corner of France through the weary years of the glorious Republic "one and indivisible!" This very year, as if at the pulling of some widely laid invisible wire, anti-priest riots broke out at the same moment from Mexico to Madrid and from Lisbon to Bologna. A ribald press with unrestrained license incited the people. Caricatures of religious, shameless in indecency, vile slanders put in words so gross, that only the unclean spirit could inspire them, were scattered broadcast in these countries. The Church processions, usual in a year of Jubilee, were attacked with violence, Convents were stoned, religious houses of priests surrounded by howling mobs, crying "down with them, death to them!" A Bishop in France was arrested at the head of a procession, by the Mayor of the town, for "outraging the public sentiment of enlightenment!" From all of which it is clear that a large majority

of the Christian races have drifted apart from the priesthood.

If Christ is God as well as man, there can be but one kind of priest. It is not possible that He could countenance contradictory ministers or agents acting in His name and by His authority. Therefore there can be but one Christian priesthood. That must necessarily be the priesthood of the Apostles Christ ordained, passed on in unbroken tradition, whose center is in Rome and whose circumference is the wide world. But within that circle have arisen two vast bodies of men who have wrought dire confusion in Christendom. First, the dissenters and revolters from the central Roman tradition, Russians, Germans, English—one hundred millions in schism and free-choice Christianity. Second, the lapsed from these first, another one hundred millions, *i. e.,* Protestants become agnostic and atheists, revolters from all religion and from God. The former have set up a priesthood and ministry of their own, and are, of course, bitterly opposed to the Catholic priesthood. The latter are opposed to both. They not only affect to despise them, but like the Arch-Agnostic and modern Arian, Huxley, feel like rising up "to smite the whole tribe" (see Hux-

ley's recent biography). Such is the present situation, sad and painful in the extreme. Now comes the English Judge's question. If God has appointed a priesthood to act for Him with men, why does He not accredit it a little more evidently before mankind; that is, so endow His priests with external attributes and manifest power, that it would be impossible to mistake their high and privileged character, or refuse submission to their guidance. His Honor Fitzjames Stephen, evidently invited the Cardinal to display before him some such manifestations of personal power as other men do not possess. Herod, we are told, expected Our Lord to do the same when brought before his tribunal. But as Jesus took no notice whatever of his wish, so Cardinal Newman, seeing that this Judge put himself on a level with that half-barbaric kinglet and his vulgar curiosity, very properly made no reply. But far less excusable than Herod was this highly educated Englishman, who could so easily have informed himself concerning the nature and history of the Christian priesthood. In one of those rarely beautiful sermons entitled "Men, Not Angels, Priests of God," already published by the Cardinal, the learned Judge would have found, had he taken the trouble to read, all

that his Eminence could tell him on that great and difficult subject. But in our weak and sensitive nature, as men, there is, alas! abundant reason why we priests should sometimes yearn to be able to make some such manifestation of our powers as the Judge demanded. Remaining only objects of faith to our fellow-men, our position among them in this unbelieving age is painful, trying and often dangerous. "I believe only what I see," said an old man of 83 years to me, the other day. That spirit is traveling fast, and far and wide. Faith is questioned, its documents in Scripture are criticized and declared defective. As long as men are free to reject or admit objects of faith just as they list, and multitudes everywhere prefer to reject, our position becomes painful to a sensitive nature, we begin to feel isolated and lonely. In this country of America, where there is an exaggerated and misleading idea of equality, the priest is regarded only "just the same as any other man." As soon as people get hold of that idea, good-bye to Catholic faith. To stir them from that fatal idea we have nothing but appeal to faith, sermons and texts, effective enough with yet a goodly number, but at the present time, as a matter of fact, of very small avail with

a vast and growing majority. Therefore it is at times profoundly distressing for a priest to stand before such a multitude of his fellow-men, and feel so helpless to convince them or induce them to accept him as the agent unto them of the great all-ruling Power of the world. It is to a priest, who firmly believes in his Divine commission, profoundly saddening, and while his thoughts are confronted with this ugly but real fact, impossible for him to be happy. Many with a cheery voice will say: "Oh, this is pessimism, it is wrong to take such gloomy views." To which the answer is simple,—it may be pessimism, but it is also fact, and we can only take such views as facts, real palpable facts, present to us. It was with amazement I heard, the other day, an Archbishop in a public speech declare himself an optimist on the subject of the progress of the Church and its influence on society. It reminded me of the ostrich hiding his head in the sand to escape surrounding perils. The Archbishop, it seemed to me, could speak so only in momentary forgetfulness of much that is very real about him. Pessimist is a nickname for the honest and comprehensive realist. Optimist is a name for the man who views only the best side of things.

He is but a partial realist. He shuts his eyes to the unpleasant and threatening and lives happily, or tries to, with all the good he knows. But if he assert that "all the good he knows" is equal to everything, and denies that it is but a tiny part of the wide reality, therein lies a self-delusion that has known many a rude awakening. So there is no choice for a priest who honestly faces and acknowledges the great realities of modern life but to feel profoundly pained about them. Facts make it so.

In the beginning of Christianity the signs that were to follow the priesthood were defined by its Divine Founder: "They shall cast out devils, they shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall be healed, and if they drink anything deadly, it shall not hurt them." (Mark xvi., 18.) But this, as a discriminate power, seems to have stopped about the dawning of the fourth century. Such manifest display of superhuman power is cited now only in cases of canonization, and but one priest in a million or two is canonized. But not only can we not display any such evident and visible power, but what seems to our weak minds harder still, no special protecting or shielding cloak is thrown over the foibles,

mishaps and misfortunes of priests, any more than over those of other men, to screen them from the eager, prying gaze of argus eyes watching or the fierce light now let in on human conduct by the public press. Some exposures have been particularly painful. There are even tramp-priests, and though the number is extremely small compared to the total roll-call, still the unreasoning multitude confirm themselves in scoffing attitude and irreverent unbelief, saying: "Oh, we told you so, just the same as other men." Nor is any special ægis flung round the physical life of priests, they die just as other men, ground up in collisions, run down by trolleys, drowned in wrecks, burned in fires, shot by communists, blown up by anarchists, all "just as other men." In North China the other day they were done to death by slow torture and with the most humiliating and shameful details of indignities, and no hand from the invisible was extended to stay or mitigate the barbarities. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: You are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke, xii., 7.) *Nolite timere vestri capilli capitis omnes numerati sunt multis passeribus meliores estis vos,*

was only promised for compensation in the reckoning, it is to be supposed.

To make things still harder for us, look at the multitude of rival and opposing preachers. To a sensitive and priestly heart this is desolating, above all in this home of religious anarchy, the United States of America. Revolt against the ancient Church, free choice in belief, which is the translation for heresy, is rampant and triumphant in this country. The "preachers" of the various sects discard priesthood, denying its sacrifice and sacraments, and they are over 100,000 in number as against 11,000 of us! They have the public ear in a much more extended way than we have, and they play upon it effectively to further repudiation of us, and utter hard sayings fraught with much venom, until their hearers are brought to the point of asking: "Are the Roman Catholics Christians?" Oh, the woe of it! Not to speak of Mahomedans, Buddhists and Fetish worshippers, heaven could scarce look down on greater confusion of religions as prevails within the area containing the Christian peoples. In that religious revolution of the 16th Century the body of doctrine was broken up, each protester taking a fragment away with him and setting up on

that, until after these three centuries and a half there are over 400 independent and contradictory so-called Christian Churches. The direst effect of this state of things, which persists in the face of all decent logic, is that another multitude has broken away and, within the pale of Christendom, have finally renounced Christianity, all its beliefs and teachings. Hear what one of the most cultivated scholars and writers of English in our day tells the Catholic graduates of Oxford University in one of his exquisite conferences: "Our rationalist age, as such, believes no more in devils to hurt us nor in angels to guard us: it has abolished witchcraft, and likewise prayer: it has drawn a veil over the mouth of hell, and hidden heaven in darkness: it has exorcised superstitious terrors, and dispelled eternal hopes: it has swept away from human vision the life of the world to come and the brightness of that expectation." Such is the sketch of the mental attitude to religion of the leisured and learned classes, so beautifully drawn by this experienced scholar, Father Joseph Rickaby, S. J. But what is sadder and more dreadful to contemplate is the coarser picture presented to us in the lives of the great majority of the wage-earning class. Little care

they about the higher questions of the soul. All the worship of their vacant hours is carried to those swarming temples of Bacchus, the saloons, and they wind up their devotions at the temples of Venus around the corners. In this small town, of scarce two thousand people, there are fourteen saloons and five brothels, all well supported, while the Churches, five of them (disunited in doctrine), are struggling in meanest poverty. Is it any wonder that we oft-times feel a yearning that God would deign to endow His true priesthood with some convincing power to show that His Own Presence is near them and with them and able to act, a power which, striking on the startled eyes of this turbulent, stiff-necked, reckless generation, would bring them back to a sense of responsibility to their Omnipotent yet patient Maker, and full faith in His Divine Son's message to men. Many a time under stress of despondency at the awful spectacle the world presents, I have sought a corner of my lonely little sanctuary and reverently besought the Silent One of the Tabernacle to look and see the spiritual desolation abroad, the callous indifference, nay, the reckless scorn of multitudes for all religion, and to do something in support of our seeming helplessness. I felt thus

bold, led by many a similar appeal of the inspired psalmist—*defecit in salutare tuum anima mea—defecerunt oculi mei in eloquium tuum, Dñe, dicentes quando consolaberis me. Exurge, quare obdormis Domine?* (Bold enough this.) *Domine, ad adjuvandum festina—tempus faciendi, Dñe, dissipaverunt legem tuam*—and many another. I arose and came away, and nothing seemed to happen—certainly nothing as I prayed for it has happened. All through this Jubilee year up to September 3rd and all last year in the Eternal City the Pope kept millions of Catholics earnestly praying, each one sixty times over, for "the extirpation of heresy." To such a simultaneous and prolonged beseeching of Heaven we would naturally expect something striking and extraordinary to happen. Yet, so far, nothing that the world has taken any notice of has happened and heresy flourishes as widely and as defiantly as ever. Just as the Jubilee was ending, to the City of San Francisco came the largest assembly of Methodists ever gathered together—the Epworth League Convention, and for two weeks, as if the Catholic Church never was heard of or existed, carried on their peculiar doings in the name of Christ—"pumping salvation into the people," as one leader wildly

expressed it. Later on, in the Fall of the same year, came the convention of the "American Episcopal Church," pushing in front of them Mr. Morgan, "the richest man on earth," and saying, "Behold in us the true Church of Christ and successors of the Apostles!" How far from extirpation is heresy like this! Surely there is and must be some explanation, if it be not a case of *"ruit coelum"*—all Heaven coming to pieces. Here be some explanations, then, humbly offered.

1st. If God endowed His priesthood with the extra and superhuman power our timorous and sensitive and weak nature yearns for, why priests would be easily the dominant power in the world. No Emperor, King or Ruler could hold any sway beside the man wielding command of forces beyond the strength or compass of all other mortals. The pagan priesthood of all times, from the Augurs of Rome, the Hierarchs of Greece and the far older Magi of Egypt, to the medicine-men of the red and brown races of to-day, always claimed personal intercourse with their divinities and exercised, or pretended to exercise, their divine power of knowledge. Hence their influence in affairs was immense. They swayed the course of events in great nations. They

were a caste or class entirely apart and above every other, not excepting even regal rank. No Ruler, not even the greatest, could afford to slight or injure them, so that in time those world-rulers, the Roman Emperors found it necessary to proclaim themselves *"Pontifices Maximi"*—high priests—to get around the difficulty. How they were able to maintain their pretentions so long, can only be accounted for by the assurance of Scripture—*"omnes dii gentium daemonia"*—they were supplied with real, demoniac, preternatural powers, supplemented by much human cunning and mere pretence. It was the priesthood of the Roman Temples who instigated and maintained the ten awful persecutions of the early Christians for three long centuries. It is easily seen, then, that when even the semblance of divine power gave a pagan priesthood such sway over their fellowmen, how vastly greater would be that of the true priesthood, were they permitted to wield indiscriminately the real, supernatural power and compelling authority of the Omnipotent and only God. All the world would be at their feet. Now, this would never do. It would change the whole face of the established order in the world. It would compel faith and therefore abolish it. It would be ask-

ing for "a new heaven and a new earth," and for that, the time is not yet.

2nd. The short span of each individual life is a time of trial. Trial supposes freedom of choice; convictions are not to be forced nor actions coerced. If they were, men would have no free choice and no trial. With a priesthood endowed as our weak nature yearns for it, our fellow-men could not help being convinced. Trial, moreover, supposes certain things placed before the free choice—things to be accepted mentally or rejected, things to be done or not to be done, faith or unfaith, right or wrong—and that with a view to praise or blame, merit or demerit, reward or punishment. Each one moves off the scene of life in time, to claim either one or the other. Now how could he claim reward for what he could not help doing or believing. No sounder verdict of common sense is heard than "no thanks to him, he could not help it, he could not do otherwise—why should he be rewarded for what he couldn't help?" So it is necessary to have a priesthood that shall be a part of the trial—to be believed by faith, on documentary evidence alone.

3rd. Though St. Paul had the gift of great miracles, that did not hinder his being mauled and

mobbed pretty roughly through the towns of Asia-Minor, as may be read in the fourteenth and following chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. The priesthood is a post of danger and a trial to the priests themselves, and is to be the measure of their reckoning for reward or punishment. Their office runs counter to the passions and evil inclinations of men, angers them and turns them into opponents and fierce enemies. What of it? It is a part of the arrangement and must be endured with all its risks.

4th. What though a cloud of other preachers arise and say "you shall not have this monopoly; we, too, feel called to preach and teach as well as you;—see, there are plenty of people who 'call' us and appoint us and want us to teach them, and we'll do it." This should not disturb you, though they have done it in multitudes. Leave these people to God. He will judge them by the standard He proposed for their trial, not by the standard they set up for themselves. What though some brethren fall; become tramp-priests or apostates, so did the angels, a third of them. It is a part of the conditions of things—sad accidents in the great trial—and the great majority do not fall.

5th. What though the greater number do not

accept you on faith, that is their own individual look-out. But a great number will always be found to accept you under the gentle suasion of singleness of purpose and the power of a blameless life.

6th. Should the dark host of ugly facts around you cause you to quail and grow despondent, think of the lone figure of the first great Christian Priest, the Divine One standing in the night-shade of Olivet with all the world against Him. Hear the sigh of His weary Sacred Heart, "My soul is sorrowful unto death," and be content to share the bitter cup which He did not refuse.

7th. Though we pray earnestly, imploringly, beseechingly, the answer will never exceed the limit of the answer given to the prayer in Gethsemane—a little personal strength and comfort—"angels came and ministered to Him;"—but not one harrowing detail of the awful Passion was spared Him. The fearful suffering had to be gone through before the final triumph of the Resurrection. It will never be different with those who bear His name; so there is nothing for it but to endure and not to be disappointed that nothing wonderful happens, as we yearn for it to happen. That would upset the plan of the trial. Our prayers are not lost. We have His

word for it that they shall be answered in some way, and it is not becoming to dictate to God what that way shall be.

8th. We read the other day that when the Pope set out for his summer house in the Vatican gardens, he was full of gaiety and joy, yet he knows the deplorable spiritual condition of the world quite as well as we do. You see he can be happy. Why? He has a good conscience and is doing his share. For the rest he hopes and trusts in the peace that passeth understanding—*"Iacta super Dominum curam tuam."* This is the only and great panacea *"in hac lacrymarum valle."*

Meanwhile there are multitudes of our fellow beings discontented with their hard conditions of life. Absolutely chafing under the sordid cares of narrow means, and by the rough imperious daily toil to earn that small pittance, discontent is bred; relatively, looking at the passing grandeur, style and luxury of the rich minority, it is further fostered and strengthened in sullen bitterness. They complain of God, grow fiercely scornful of all that is said and taught in His behalf, and, failing to reach the Invisible, they turn on those who present themselves before them as His agents and priests, and pour

upon them the vials of their hatred. Hence is the priesthood a dangerous calling and a thing hard for flesh and blood to bear as faith decays. When a priest sees what he has to teach as necessary for salvation flouted and scorned by the vast majority of his fellows among whom he lives, he ought to be the unhappiest of men. I certainly feel it for that reason alone. How can God tolerate it? Yet He does. Priests are only objects of faith in their profession. When faith decays, is dying or is dead, priests are in a pitiable position—especially when their subsistence comes or ceases to come from "the offerings of the people." And in this 20th century, unless God come in visible aid, human eyes can but foresee dreadful issues. Yet our hope in Him must "never be confounded." With St. Augustine we daily say so.

VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

Thoughts on the Celibacy of the Clergy.

[By Rev. Ferreol Girardey, C. SS. R.]

"Let no man take this honor, but he that is called of God as Aaron was."—*Hebr.* v. 4.

Nothing is more necessary in the world than the Catholic priesthood. It is impossible sufficiently to esteem and appreciate the past and present benefits conferred on mankind by the Catholic priesthood, not only in the spiritual, but even in the temporal order. By converting the ancient pagan world to the Christian religion, the Catholic priesthood rescued human society from the utter degradation and ruin into which paganism, by its gross ignorance and abominable corruption, was fast plunging the human race. The religion of Christ with its admirable priesthood did not appear a moment too soon on earth to enter upon its mission of regeneration.

Its beneficial effects upon mankind were due chiefly to the labors, virtues and consequent influence of its priesthood.

It was the Catholic priesthood, directed and guided by its head—the Pope—that converted, humanized and civilized the barbarous hordes—our ancestors—when they had overrun Europe and destroyed almost every vestige of civilization. It was the Catholic priesthood, under the same guidance, warning, urging and arming Christendom, that saved Europe from being turned into Mahomedan provinces, and thus prevented the utter extinction of liberty, science, art and civilization itself. It was the Catholic priesthood that taught the converted barbarians agriculture, the sciences, the liberal arts and the art of governing. It is the Catholic priesthood which has produced, or at least inspired, the greatest geniuses, the most profound thinkers, the most eloquent orators since the Christian era, and the most noble, the most virtuous, the most admirable and the most heroic deeds the world has ever witnessed.

It is the Catholic priesthood which still enlightens mankind by teaching the truths of divine revelation,—truths which enlighten the world and pre-

vent it from being entirely led astray by the most shocking and absurd aberrations of the human mind. We must not seek the bulwarks and safeguards of human society in the so greatly vaunted and grossly exaggerated modern progress and enlightenment, but in the Catholic priesthood, for it is the most powerful and the only successful opponent of immorality, of tyranny of all kinds and anarchy,—those fearful evils that are undermining society and threatening its entire destruction. The Catholic priesthood is the savior of morality by constantly teaching, inculcating and upholding its true principles, combating the widespread evil of divorce as well as vice in every shape and form, and ever restraining the human passions from utterly corrupting and ruining the individual and destroying the family and society itself.

The Catholic priesthood is the parent of charity and of charitable institutions,—now the boast of our age and country. Charity, and even its ape—philanthropy,—was unknown in the world until the Catholic priesthood had, by word and example, taught men that they are all brethren in Jesus Christ, and that what is done for His sake to the least of mortals, is done, as it were, to Jesus Christ Himself.

It was the Catholic priesthood that founded the first charitable institution, and, to this day, it is the Catholic priesthood that everywhere inspires, starts, spreads, upholds, directs and protects the most noble and the best regulated institutions for the relief of every human ill.

Is not the Catholic priesthood the teacher and guide of mankind in the true religion? And what would become of the human race without the true religion? What human society was when paganism flourished, that is, devoid of morality and of real virtue; and now, as then, vice, dishonesty and gross corruption would soon reign everywhere supreme, and anarchy and the consequent dissolution of human society would eventually follow as the natural result. The true religion is, then, necessary to the world as the sole and sure means of escaping these terrible misfortunes, of securing even temporal prosperity and of realizing the benefits of genuine civilization. But it is principally through the efforts and influence of its priesthood that the true religion is able to exert a beneficial and saving action on society. All this clearly proves that the Catholic priesthood is indispensable to the world, and that it is the divine

channel for the diffusion of every good gift among mankind.

In a spiritual sense, the priest is God's agent, His minister-plenipotentiary, His representative, His treasurer, His vice-regent. Being invested with the power of remitting sins and of offering the holy Sacrifice of the New Law, the priest acts as a mediator between God and man. Through his power of consecrating, that is, of changing the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and thereby calling the Son of God down from heaven into his own hands on our altars, and offering the same as a worthy and adequate victim to the heavenly Father, the priest equals in dignity the Blessed Virgin herself and surpasses her in power.

Moreover, the priest, possessing the power of forgiving sins, in some manner, equals God Himself in power. The malice of sin is so great, that no creature, however perfect or holy, can of itself atone for it; and, nevertheless, the priest possesses the power of remitting it. "The power of forgiving sins," says St. John Chrysostom, "is greater than the power of raising the dead to life (and this, indeed, is a divine power): for by the latter a corruptible body is restored to a natural and perishable

life, whilst by the former supernatural and everlasting life is restored to a dead soul."

The priest is God's mouth-piece. He speaks for God; his words are God's words: "God," says St. Paul, "exhorting through us" (2 Cor. v., 20). The official words of the priest are to be accepted with docility as the words of God. "He that heareth you," says Christ, "heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x., 16). In the priest's mouth the word of God possesses great efficacy; it enlightens the mind, stirs up the conscience and moves the will. It confirms the just and converts sinners; it inspires weak human beings to rule their violent passions, to perform heroic deeds, and enables the priest to become a fisher of men for the Church of Christ.

The priest is the shepherd of God's flock. It is his duty to procure for it good pastures, to feed it with suitable spiritual nourishment, to watch over it and protect it against danger, to govern it by wise regulations, and to administer to it proper remedies in disease. To it he should devote all his time, all his talents and all his energy; for its welfare he should constantly labor and even sacrifice himself. The priest, endowed with the same powers as Christ Himself possessed when on earth, performs, con-

tinues and perpetuates the work of Christ, viz: the salvation of souls; he is, therefore, as St. Ambrose calls him truly, a "second Christ."

How great, then, how noble, how exalted and how sublime the vocation of the Catholic priest, who represents and personates Christ, who continues and perpetuates the work of the Redeemer! "On account of its great ends," says St. Alphonsus, "the priesthood is of all vocations the most noble, the most excellent, the most exalted, the most sublime." Such a vocation, however, must come from God Himself. No one may enter so sublime a state solely through his own choice. In fact, it belongs to God alone to destine for each man his particular state of life. "I know, O Lord," says the prophet, "that the way of man is not his; neither is it in a man to walk and direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23). "Everyone," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, another after that" (1 Cor. vii., 7). If the vocation to even the ordinary states of life should come from God, the vocation to the priesthood, that is, to become God's own representative, to personate Christ Himself, necessarily claims a divine origin. Even the Son of God did not of Himself assume the

priestly dignity, but, as St. Paul expressly declares, He was called to it by His heavenly Father: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called as Aaron was. So Christ also did not glorify Himself, that He might be made a High-priest, but He that said unto Him: Thou art forever a priest according to the order of Melchisedech" (Hebr. v., 4-6). Our divine Savior Himself informs the apostles, that those who labor with Him for the salvation of souls, must be sent by His heavenly Father. "The harvest," He says, "is great indeed, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the vineyard, that He send laborers into His harvest" (Luke x., 2). Before choosing His twelve apostles from among His followers, Jesus Christ spent the whole night in prayer to obtain light from His heavenly Father, and to ascertain from Him which of His disciples were destined by Him to the sublime vocation of the apostleship.

After our divine Savior's ascension into heaven St. Peter, to whom He had entrusted the care of His whole flock, ordered an election to be held to fill the vacancy occasioned in the ranks of the apostles by the treason and death of Judas. The voting resulted in a tie between Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. To

decide between the two the faithful had recourse to prayer: "Thou, O Lord," said they, "who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two men Thou hast chosen" (Acts i., 24). Hence it belongs to God Himself to give such a vocation.

We read in the Gospel that some offered themselves to Jesus Christ to become members of His priesthood, but He refused them, whilst He, of His own accord, called to that state others who had manifested no desire or inclination for such a vocation. "And it came to pass," says St. Luke, "as they walked in the way, that a certain man said to Him: I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. Jesus said to him: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. But He said to another: Follow Me. And he said: Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him: Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God. And another said: I will follow Thee, Lord; but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house. Jesus said to him: No man, putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 57-62). To all these proofs of the divine origin of the vocation to

the priesthood let us add the express words of our loving Redeemer: "You have not chosen Me," He says, "but I have chosen you and have appointed you, that you should go and bring forth fruit" (John xv. 16).

The priesthood is so sublime in itself, so awe-inspiring in its dignity and powers, and so full of responsibility in its functions, that, in the early ages of the Church, men of tried virtue and acknowledged holiness of life, used every imaginable effort and ingenuity to escape it, deeming themselves wholly unworthy of so high a calling and unfit to exercise its exalted duties. "I find," says St. Cyprian, "all holy men in dread of the priesthood as of an enormous and insupportable burden." To try the obedience of one of his holiest monks, St. Basil commanded him to request publicly to be raised to the priesthood. The monk's submission to such an order was looked upon by all who knew of it, as an act of heroic virtue, because in making such a request he had apparently proclaimed himself before all as filled with the spirit of pride and an inordinate ambition in aspiring to the most exalted of dignities.

From all that we have said it must be inferred

that it is sinful to enter the priesthood without a divine vocation. Such an act would be an unwarranted usurpation of a divine dignity and office, and would result in extreme danger of salvation for one who would thus intrude himself without the requisite fitness and divine helps, into a state of life, the sublimity and obligations of which would prove formidable to the angels themselves.

Another natural conclusion from the above, is that the young man, whom God calls to this exalted dignity, is bound to obey this call, and his parents are obliged, not only to give their consent, but also to assist him, by all the means in their power, to follow the divine call, however great the sacrifices such a course may entail on them. The reason is, that God has the first claim to their son, and that He has only lent, or entrusted him to them, and that, whenever He demands him of them, it is their duty to submit to His holy will. Any resistance on their part to the divine will in this, after it has been clearly manifested to them, will expose them to incur His displeasure, and even to just and fearful punishments. But true Christian parents will not consider it a sacrifice for them thus to give up their beloved son at God's bidding; on the contrary, they will

look upon it as a great honor and an inestimable favor, that God should deign to call one or more of their sons to that most sublime of dignities—the priesthood.

He who is called to the priesthood is obliged, as we have just said, to follow the divine call, to do all in his power to be faithful to it and to become a worthy and holy priest. He ought not to grow faint-hearted at the thought of his weakness and imperfections, but he should do his best and trust in God, for, says St. Thomas, "God, when choosing an individual for some special purpose, so prepares and disposes him, as to render him fit to carry out His designs, according to the saying of the apostle: 'Our sufficiency is from God, who hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament' " (2 Cor. iii., 5, 6).

To enter the priesthood in a becoming manner certain qualifications are required. Of these some are physical, such as soundness of body, freedom from such bodily defects or diseases as unfit one for discharging the duties of that sublime state. Other requisites regard the mind: a priest should not be an idiot or insane, nor over-scrupulous or devoid of talent. He should possess at least moderate talent and sound common sense. Other qualifications re-

gard the morals. The aspirant to the priesthood should be of legitimate birth, of a decent and honorable family, and his own morals should be pure, and his conduct irreproachable and edifying.

In our times learning is more necessary than in the past. He who lacks the necessary science will, if he becomes a priest, prove a disgrace to the priesthood and to the Church. In the pulpit he will preach nonsense, and even heresies; and in the confessional his ignorance will occasion the loss of souls. The candidate for the priesthood is, therefore, bound to go conscientiously through the prescribed course of study, and, besides this, to acquire as much knowledge as he can in other branches of science, so that in the ministry he may be able to render himself useful in many ways to every class of people, and, by his knowledge and practical sense, uphold the honor of the Church and her priesthood and save many souls. He who, either through want of talent, or through sloth and indifference, would fail to acquire the necessary learning, is wholly unfit to enter the priesthood.

But the candidate for the priesthood should bear in mind that, however important and necessary science really is for the priest, virtue is still more

indispensable for him. "The priest," says St. Ignatius Loyola, "needs virtue far more than science." The priest should be both pious and humble; neither the most extensive learning nor the gift of rare eloquence can ever supply the lack of either piety or humility. "Learning without humility," says St. Vincent de Paul, that grand model of the priesthood, "has always proved very injurious to the Church. Pride has caused the perdition of the majority of the learned, as it did that of Lucifer. To execute his designs God does not need learned men; He usually employs the simple and the humble to convert men and to promote the welfare of the Church."

We have a most striking example of this truth in the apostles chosen by Christ to effect the conversion of the pagan world. Among other illustrious examples of modern times we have the Redemptorist Father, Blessed Clement Maria Hofbauer, who though possessed of no more than the requisite amount of learning, nevertheless, by his simple piety, virtue and zeal, exerted so wonderful an influence over the learned and the great, as to practically crush Josephism in Germany and to revive the glories of the faith in many countries. Who has not

heard of the wonderful influence of the Venerable Curé d' Ars, and the innumerable conversions he effected! And yet he was far from being learned or eloquent. By the influence of his virtues and by his simple words he did more for the welfare of the Church than all the learned men of his time.

Our divine Savior thus beautifully expresses the great truth we are now considering: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones." (Mat. xi. 25). Experience shows that a truly virtuous man will always exert a greater beneficial influence over his fellow-men than a merely learned man. True wisdom consists rather in virtue than in learning. "He who loves God," says St. Augustine, "is more truly wise than all the learned men who do not love Him." Writing to certain young aspirants to the priesthood, St. Alphonsus says: "What Jesus Christ requires above all else is, that we strive to become saints. We must study; but our sole object in so doing ought to be to please God, otherwise our studies will only lengthen our purgatory, or even cause our eternal ruin. I am not sorry to see the students retrenching from their studies to devote more time to

prayer. We have greater need of holiness than of science. If we are not holy, we run the risk of falling into thousands of sins." This agrees with the saying of the Apostle of the Gentiles: "If I should have all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

The candidate for the priesthood must, then, above all, be virtuous. If he is addicted to some bad habit, to some vice, and especially if he be not pure or sober, he is bound to give up all intention of entering the priesthood. St. Alphonsus expressly teaches that if such a one persists in aspiring to the priesthood, he is unworthy of absolution, because in a candidate for Holy Orders the dispositions, which in ordinary sinners suffice to merit absolution in the sacrament of Penance, are wholly inadequate to fit him to enter the priesthood, which, being so sublime and so holy a state, requires positive virtue or holiness in the recipient, for God Himself says to His priests: "You shall be holy unto Me, because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have separated you that you should be Mine" (Levit. xx. 26). Hence a confessor cannot, in conscience, absolve a candidate for Holy Orders who is an habitual sinner, especially if he is addicted to impurity or

intemperance, however great his contrition and however firm his resolution to amend. The chief reason, says St. Alphonsus, is because such a one is unfit to be raised to a Holy Order, which necessarily requires a positive and *tried* virtue in the recipient. The impure young man, especially, has no business to aspire to the priesthood, which requires the purity of angels in him who exercises it.

It is therefore indispensable to the candidate for the priesthood, that he should seriously strive to acquire and practice beforehand all the virtues necessary for the priest, for, strictly speaking, none but a saint deserves to be raised to that most sublime of dignities, by which a weak and frail man becomes truly God's representative—a "second Christ."

Thoughts on the Celibacy of the Clergy.

The virtue of chastity is absolutely necessary for the priest. "The priest," says Origen, "being called to stand at the altar of God, must above all, be clothed with chastity." "Let no one," says Pope Innocent III., "be permitted to receive Holy Orders,

unless he be a virgin or, at least, of a tried chastity, because, it behooves the priest to be the temple and dwelling of the Holy Ghost." "No one," says Pope St. Gregory, "should be admitted to the ministry of the altar, unless he be, before ordination, already of approved chastity." The priest, because he represents and personates Jesus Christ, because he is a "second Christ," should be chaste and free from all family ties. His priesthood should be like that of Melchisedech, who had no genealogy, who was without family or posterity. In like manner, the priest should be without family or posterity, and, moreover, like the apostles, he should renounce, for Christ's sake, not only parents and relatives, but also a wife.

The priest, as a true man of God, should not and cannot be the husband of a wife. Like Jesus Christ, he must be wholly engaged in his Father's business; he must be entirely absorbed in it and entirely devoted to it. This, however, he cannot do, if he has a wife, for St. Paul says expressly: "He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things which belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is

divided" (1 Cor. vii., 32, 33). But it behooves the priest, since he belongs wholly to God, to attend solely to the interests of God. His priestly duties are such that, if he had charge of a family, he could not properly perform them. When he entered the priesthood he chose God alone as his inheritance and his portion.

Experience shows that a married clergy sanctify neither themselves nor the people. Not to speak of the Protestant sects, witness the Greek and Russian clergy; they produce no saints either among themselves or among their flocks. They exercise the priesthood as a mere trade, and usually it descends from father to son. They are not revered or even respected by their people; they lack all zeal for the conversion of sinners and of pagan nations, and are wholly indifferent to institutions of charity; they never attain to any eminence in learning; they are, in a word, spiritually barren, and why? Because they are married and are, therefore, wholly engrossed with the cares of their family, and these cares quench all ardor and zeal in them. They know not what it is to be disinterested, mortified or self-sacrificing. They neither practice exalted virtue nor attain any eminence whatever.

But look at the chaste clergy. What a difference! The people esteem, love and revere them as second Christs, accept their teaching with docility, and confide in them as the representatives of the divine Savior. Their ministry is fertile, producing saints among themselves and among their flocks. The wonderful institutions of charity in all ages owe to them their origin and main support. They are remarkable for their disinterestedness, their spirit of self-sacrifice, their undaunted courage and zeal in ministering to the sick and plague-stricken, and in carrying the Gospel amid poverty, privations, sufferings, tortures and death, to the utmost bounds of the earth, to even the most barbarous and savage tribes. It is they who have converted to Christianity from paganism and civilized all the Christian nations. Now compare the two priesthoods, their labors and their virtues, their results in both the spiritual and temporal orders, and you will see that, as there is nothing more contemptible than a married priesthood, so also there is nothing more honorable, more noble or more heroic than a chaste priesthood.

Can we reasonably imagine that our divine Savior, who was so careful to surround Himself with

virginal souls,—the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. John Baptist, St. John the Evangelist,—during His mortal career, would not require His priesthood, that most noble portion of His Church, His immaculate Spouse, who are His representatives, His favorites, the continuators and perpetuators of His great work, to be pure and chaste? Truly, He who chose as His Mother the purest of virgins, would not choose any but virginal or chaste souls to be the priests of His Church, to be invested with the grandest and most sublime of dignities and with powers truly divine! No one appreciates better than He the worth of chastity: "No price," says the Holy Ghost, "is worthy of a continent soul" (Eccli. xxvi. 20). Did not God prescribe continence to the Jewish priests when engaged in the functions of their ministry, although these consisted merely in offering material things, such as incense and animal sacrifices? Why did He require them to be continent and chaste at such times? Because He wished them to be pure, that they might the more worthily approach Him. How pure, then, must not that man be, who should daily offer to God, not the blood of oxen and sheep, but the very flesh and blood of the Immaculate Lamb, who daily holds

in his hands the Son of God, receives Him into his heart, gives Him to others, and, furthermore, dispenses all the heavenly mysteries in the Church of God! None but the pure and chaste in body and soul can be permitted to perform such sublime functions, and to be so familiar with God and divine things!

The priest belongs no longer to himself, but wholly to God. Wherefore his body, his soul, his mind, his heart and his senses, his whole being belong to God, and he must be detached from creatures. Nor should he harbor within himself any affection, any attachment, any love except for God, or, at least, unless it is based on divine love. He is bound to do all he can to remain true to God, who is a jealous God claiming and demanding, in strict justice, his whole and undivided heart. The priest should, then, be an angel in human flesh and lead a holy and angelic life.

PANEGYRIC OF IRELAND'S APOSTLE.

[By Rev. W. J. Madden.]

"But other sheep have I who are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice."—*John* x. 16.

To every thoughtful mind the recurrence of this day presents one of the greatest of moral facts. The sun in every hour of its course to-day looks down on millions of a scattered race celebrating the name and memory of a man who has been dead for fourteen hundred and fifty years! Who was he and what has he done to be remembered thus so widely at this distant day? Was he the founder of this race that so reveres him? Was he a wise and great ruler, who in some crisis of their fate lifted their country into place and power among the nations? Was he some valiant and brilliant leader who carried their arms to conquest and to victory, winning for them wide possessions of a commanding commercial position with the wealth and influence it

brings? If such he were, there would be little to wonder at in so perennial a remembrance. It is a law of human history. To such benefactors the pagans decreed divine honors even and gave them rank among the gods.

But he whose name the Irish race is celebrating to-day did none of these things for them. He was even alien to them in race. Their country has never risen to a place among what are known as the Great Powers. All the other way. Its fate in the course of history has been to lose place. It fell to be a conquered province of a stronger, and what is looked on as a more fortune-favored neighboring country. With that it lost all prospect of commercial greatness and commanding wealth. Thus this race has nothing that the world prizes to thank him for. Yet there are few places in the great round world on which the sun rose this morning, whether in the colder climes of the Northern hemisphere, or under the summer skies of the South, where men have not gathered for worship in their temples, walked through streets and highways in civic processions—banners streaming in the wind, and music filling the air, and assembled in meeting to hear in spoken words old memories revived—all in honor of the

name of *Patrick*. Who then was he and what great thing has he done for them, for great they must deem it to be, that could evoke such grateful and enduring enthusiasm?

I.

As a child this man was borne a captive to an island little known far out upon the western wave. It was a country hardly in touch with the rest of Europe, for the Roman power never reached so far. More than likely the Romans never knew of the existence of this Iverna. Having completed their conquest of Britain, they could see from its western shores nothing but the waste of waters, and so rested there without suspecting other land beyond. But that land was there, and it was to its wild coast that its pirates carried the captive boy. Its inhabitants were a strangely-mixed race. The adventurous Norsemen of all kinds had long found its northward shores, while the trade-winds of the southwest bore the craft of the Armoricans from Spain to its southern districts. These latter being originally Phœnicians from the other end of the Mediterranean basin, it so came to pass that many and distant and brave and adventurous races gave their quota to people this farthest of the western isles. As

the races were mixed so were their creeds. They were idol worshippers, adored ancestral ghosts, and propitiated the spirits of the air, while the rest, and perhaps the greater part, had the Oriental cult of the Fire-god, with its dreadful rite of infant sacrifice, as their rude altars the *Cromlechs* still standing in some places may witness.

From what coast or which country this boy was taken, or where was the place of his birth, it has been very difficult to ascertain, as the records of this distant time are scant, especially about minor events which only later times showed to be at all important. We all know more or less what a protracted controversy, by no means wanting in energy and heat, has existed about the land of Patrick's birth. It has long seemed to me that the heat is uncalled for and the energy wasted. Why not settle the matter by saying simply that this Patricius or Patrick was a Roman citizen, since he was certainly born within the territory under the sway of the Roman Empire. Let those who contend for France and for Scotland, and the few who even put in a claim for England, remember that in those days there was neither France nor Spain nor England nor Scotland, such as we know them now. They

were provinces and integral parts of the great Roman Empire. Now it is admitted that the father of this boy was some kind of an official in the consular service of that Empire, and as such liable to be moved about into its different and distant provinces. It has been ascertained that he was actually so moved about. When in Gaul he married the sister of the Bishop of Tours. He was subsequently, as is most likely, transferred for duty into some part of Britain. It may have been in the northern part, which part, be it remarked, had been largely peopled by an immigration of the ancient Irish, or Scoti as the Romans called them, and now known as Scotland. At what place in these changes of residence Patrick was born, it really does not matter, or alter the fact that he was the son of an Imperial official and so neither more nor less than a Roman citizen, a title sufficiently honorable and non-provincial, and in that sense non-national. That being so, all international rivalry or claim in the matter is baseless and irrelevant. It is something too, to remark that from the name Patrick or Patricius he must have been of noble birth, as that name among the Romans was given only to those of high or patrician rank in the State.

At any rate those pirate ancestors of ours must have been very daring to have bearded thus the Roman power, and secured in one of their sea raids into the Scotia of Britain, a child of a Roman Prefect. But so it was, and it as his lot to be sold on their return to a farmer in the northern part of their island, who employed him as a shepherd boy. Now this lad, the nephew of a Bishop and the son of a good Catholic mother, was sure to be intelligently instructed in the rudiments of his faith, and in proportion must he have been touched by the helpless groping of this pagan people to explain to themselves the evils and trials of life, and to seek relief and escape therefrom in vain and cruel rites. And when it happened to him to be safely back again in his own country, for some of those Gaels were kind to the poor boy and aided him to escape, he seemed to hear them evermore in dreams appealing to him to return and share with them the better and gentler faith he believed, and impart to them the surer and the brighter hope that was his. Thus came to him the call to be an apostle to the Irish, in the opening years of the fifth century.

And to accomplish that high unselfish mission he from that moment devoted his life. And when the

time was ripe for the attempt, it was not as any self-appointed agent, or with any self-constituted authority he set out. No, he went to the recognized seat of the central Christian religious authority, and kneeling at the feet of St. Peter's then-successor in the See of Rome, St. Celestine, he sought and received his commission, and thus he carried straight from Rome to Ireland the pure and full tradition of the Christian teaching.

In those distant days when travel was so difficult, we can readily fancy what a tedious task was his to make his way from the center of Christendom to the extreme north-western limit of Europe, across more than one sea, to the island that lay out in the wild Atlantic waters. What a brave heart was his to face again the perils of a country where but a few years before he was sold by pirates as a slave! What singleness of purpose and heroic self-devotedness in him to leave all that human heart holds dear, because he believed he could be serviceable to these strangers of a distant land!

It is well-known that his reception on his second advent, alone too and unfriended, was almost miraculously peaceful, and the success of his mission of compassion assured from the start. It is a ques-

tion of grave moment, this change in the religion of an entire nation. When we contrast the way in which this same Christian message was received by greater and more cultured peoples—the disturbances excited—the rage it called forth—the fierce and torturing persecution let loose against its evangels —who can refuse to harbor kindlier thoughts about those pagan ancestors of ours who received it in gentleness, with ready welcome and trustful submission? It is, we are bold to say, the only instance on record, besides the conversion of Armenia by St. Gregory Illuminator, of the bloodless conversion of an entire people. It argues, does it not, among the rulers of them, a spirit of calm and reasoning intelligence, and hearts at least prepared for virtue, and that virtue of the highest kind known to man. This not only redounds to their great credit, but fails not to stir in our minds feelings of laudable pride and admiration. Does it not greatly modify too, nay, utterly change the harsh features of the picture in which some, not our friends, have painted them for us as wild and bloodthirsty and irreclaimable savages by nature?

To other apostles of nations it was given only to see the bare foundations of their work in place.

But to Patrick, before he closed his eyes in the rest of the just, it was given to see that work accomplished in its plentitude. His dying eyes could rest on a national Church established in all the branches of the Christian spiritual life, and firmly fixed by the bond of faith to the chair and rock of Peter's See.

And thus it came to be that the words of Divine promise were fulfilled for Ireland through Patrick's ministry—"And other sheep have I that are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice." And wherever Ireland's sons have been throughout those many and changing centuries, that voice they have not ceased to hear. They hear it still, and a legend has it that they shall hear it with like submissive faith until the day of the great re-gathering. For it is told that when the aged prelate lay sick to death on the poor pallet of his monastic cell in Down, he gathered all his remnant strength to bend once more his weary knees in prayer, and into that prayer he threw the claim of forty years of toil for God, and asked but one thing in return—that the people to whom he preached at His Divine bidding, should never lose the faith he taught. It was his last spoken word on

earth; the answer he heard in heaven. Fourteen hundred years of time are a witness so far to us what that answer was.

II.

And this is all that Patrick did for Ireland and Ireland's race. For this and this alone they still revere his name and keep his memory green, green as their own island hillsides. Are they wise in this? What gain has it brought them? In a worldly sense, nothing at all. Worldly prosperity has never since been theirs in any great measure or for any long time. In the fortunes of history and the vicissitudes of time they have seen the very soil they sprung from taken away and given to the alien. Nationhood they have lost, and now for many weary years a stranger government by the right of conquerors holds exclusive sway in their affairs. More than that it has brought them a heavy share in the burden of the Cross. As long as their English rulers remained Catholic like themselves, that is, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, they were not always nor altogether unfriendly with the subject people. But when they renounced the ancient faith and severed their country from the center of Catholic unity, then, because Ireland refused to do

the same, they turned on her in a persecution so ruthless that for savageness and duration can only be paralleled by what happened to the early Christians under the pagan Emperors of Rome. In their efforts to root out the Catholic faith in Ireland from Elizabeth to the Georges, the wonder is that they did not exterminate the race. The reader of the penal enactments of this cruel time, which may be found summarized in the many books treating of this chapter of our history, even in the work of so little a suspected author as Mr. Lecky in his "Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," cannot fail to think it an almost miraculous intervention that a single Irishman remained alive to tell the dreadful tale of the nightmare strain and stress that for two weary centuries brooded over his devoted land.

In the milder days that followed what is not too graciously called the "Emancipation," a curious incident happened to an English gentleman touring in Ireland, which revealed in a few moments, and probably for the first time, a realistic view of the doings of his persecuting fellow-countrymen in those days, now marked forever with the brand of humanity's shame. Happening to pass through a certain town in the north of the country, he called upon the Catho-

lic Bishop. After due introduction and explanation the Bishop extended to him the hospitality of an invitation to dine with him that evening. Around the walls of the dining-room hung some portraits of former Bishops, but what puzzled the stranger was to see in the middle of the row a painting of a man dressed as a Piper. He naturally kept asking himself what on earth was that Piper doing among the Bishops. Observing his surprise, his host said, "Yes, those portraits you are looking at all represent my predecessors for many hundred years." "What," he said, "not all—not the man with the tartan and bagpipes?" "Oh, yes, he too, and I may add, he was the greatest Bishop of them all. You see in his day the British official who detected a priest ministering to his people could shoot him at sight, and claim the same reward in money as if he shot a wolf. But if he brought in a Bishop's skin he would get as much as if he shot five wolves. So when His Lordship went his rounds for confirmation among the humble cottages of his people—the churches were all either confiscated or destroyed—he had to be very cautious. Now he happened to be an accomplished performer on the pipes, so that when the watchers posted on the hills gave the alarm of the

soldiery approaching, the sacred vestments and objects of Divine worship were quickly hidden away. The Bishop donned his tartan, seized his pipes, the just now kneeling worshippers became a social gathering, and His Lordship piped to his dancing flock until the 'sassenach' went his way. Thus this good Bishop and able and cultured man lived and labored for his poor people with his life in his hand for many years. He was at last taken and hanged with the usual barbarous accompaniments of those awful days." That portrait of the Bishop-piper still exists in the chief town, if I mistake not, of the very diocese over which St. Patrick first ruled.

I ventured to tell this anecdote, not to re-awaken angry memories or excite animosity, for now is not the time, and certainly this is not the place for that, but rather to stimulate you amid the blandishments of more auspicious days to value and to keep that treasure of the faith it cost our forefathers so dear to hand down intact to us. For, if ever a protecting hand of Providence were visible in this world, it is in the fact that Ireland's faith did not fail, nor her people perish in that long night of storm and wreck. Far from it. The wonder grows into the plainly miraculous, when we see her race grown to-day to

the vast increase of twenty millions in every part of the earth. A thought that ought to deepen correspondingly our sense of responsibility.

It is quite certain, humanly speaking, that the Catholic Church would have died out utterly in all the English-speaking countries, had not the Irish been left to keep it alive.

For this, in the ways of Providence, they have been driven in such numbers abroad through their conquerors' colonies and in exile to the very shores of England. For this they have been deprived of their national language and made to speak in the alien tongue of the English. And what is a country or what a language compared to the honor of being made by our Lord the standard-bearers of His Church among a powerful people, wayward and rebellious against her, and being given the sweet revenge of leading them back, in God's good time, to union with the one true Church they should never have abandoned. The Irish race has been wondrously preserved and providentially scattered to be the leaven in the mass of English-speaking Protestantism, and woe to them if they prove forgetful of so high an honor or recreant to so divine a mission.

But I must not fail to indicate and explain if I

can the significance of a certain severely trying fact. While St. Patrick's gift to Ireland brought her nothing in worldly gain, and occasioned much terrible suffering, she has had to witness her conqueror and her persecutor blessed beyond the nations of the earth. Since England renounced Catholicism, and many speciously boast *because* of that, her career has been an unbroken growth of influence and wealth and power. She has pushed her conquests to the limits of the world. Her commerce whitens the seas, and her fleets maintain her mistress thereof. The spoils of distant lands lay heaped upon her shores until her money is well-nigh past reckoning. Her name has long been in honor and in dread before the earth, and there is always sunshine in her wide domain. This is all in the realm of fact and cannot be gainsaid, nor can it be disguised either, that for a Catholic, more particularly for the Irish Catholic, it is a trying subject for reflection. For side by side with that, just as patent is the fact that no nation in the world has ever dealt such deadly blows against what we are bound to believe is Christ's true Church.

More than that, her people with their pretence of private judgment, have split up Christianity itself

into almost unrecognizable fragments, while her wrangling sects, going forth as missionaries, have paralyzed the whole missionary work the Catholic Church was doing among the heathen for centuries before their Protestant revolt. For the heathens are first puzzled at so many jarring versions of the Christian creed, and the more intelligent end by deriding and mocking at the teachers.

If the Catholic Church be true, oh! how dire will be the reckoning of the English race with the Divine Founder who "planted that Church in His blood!" And it is precisely that thought which on calmer reflection makes us so little envious of their great prosperity. That prosperity and fair-seeming fortune are but for to-day, He and His judgments are for to-day and forever. Among us there is not a man, no not one, whose faith is not dead or dying, who would not rather see his country bowed down in tears of trial and affliction with yet the halo of immortality and the hope of eternal things bright around her, than crowned with worldly victory, the spoils and blood of conquest in her hands and the crime of apostasy in her heart!

If nations are always to be and men always to live on earth, then Ireland's would have been the fool's

part in not following England's footsteps—granted. But let us see what value God sets on men and nations, and all their works. On the eve of the great reckoning day appointed for the Judge of the quick and the dead, in one dreadful moment, by one jar, perhaps, of the huge globe's axis, all the accumulated works of the human generations, all the laborious building-up of the slow centuries, will be brought to nought, and melt away as the "baseless fabric of a vision." What are human works, no matter what their magnitude seems to the puny stature of our view, to the infinite riches and resources of the mighty Creator and owner of all things? If He is to destroy, His, too, is the power to restore. If loss be suffered for Him, His it is to be rich in compensation. That moment of universal destruction is foretold and is revealed. Have you ever seen a meteor flash across the twilight sky? Students of the stars declare that these are flying fragments of a broken world, set on fire by the rapidity of their outcast motion and friction against our atmosphere. In some such way will this globe of ours be cast off its orbit, and tangent in fearful velocity with the cosmic dust of space, light its own consuming fire. Predicted too and in "revelation writ" is what is to follow—a new earth and a new heaven, and a readjustment of things in

stricter and surer measure. "And under the throne of God all the saints cried out, 'Vindicate our blood, O Lord our God.' And a great voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, 'It is done.'" (Apoc. vi. 10 and xvi. 17.)

It is only by thus lifting their thoughts above earthly things, and viewing them from the side and in the light of the supernatural, that the Irish race can calmly acquiesce in a worldly fate that is hard for them to bear. "Here (and here only) is the patience of the faithful who keep the commandments, and the Faith in Jesus." (Apoc. xiv. 12.)

And this, and this only, is why they deem themselves wise in being grateful to St. Patrick for what he has done for them, and keeping green the memory of that honored name through all the changing fortunes of the passing centuries of time. And here to-night at this furthest limit of the earth, the very antipodes of the place where Patrick preached and prayed, is it not wonderful to see so vast a number of the race he loved congregated in this sacred edifice dedicated under his name, to give glory to God for his work done for their fathers in the old, old time long ago. What I said in the opening I now repeat, it is truly one of the greatest moral facts in all history.

But as Catholics we are not idly here. We believe in the "communion of saints." We believe, therefore, that he who preached to our nation the "Word of Life," still follows its fortunes. We believe that in the mirror of God's beatific vision he beholds us and through God's permission hears what we say to him in prayer. And oh! let our prayer be to him to-night for the old faith and the old land we have left far away. For the old faith that it may not in you nor in your foreign born children, nor in their children's children for aye, be disgraced. For the old land from which neither seas nor continents nor trials of exile have ever been able to loose the bond of her children's unforgetting love—that he may bless that poor fatherland of ours—that he may have in his sainted keeping the cherished homesteads by the green hills of holy Ireland. In the hour in which we are the fortunes of our poor country are again darkly overcast, delays in righting wrong have sicklied o'er the wan, pale visage of hope, and the divided councils of our friends have deepened yet more the gloomy forecast of the uncertain future. Would that to-night the dearest of our saints may hear in heaven, from our scattered race, the cry of well-nigh breaking hearts, for faith, for home, for liberty.

252.4
M 264
MADDEN, W.J.
16234
AUTHOR
Discourses on Priesthood
TITLE
DATE LOANED | BORROWER'S NAME | ROOM NUMBER
Morris
STORAGE - CBPL
16234